

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

DISTRICT 9

500 S. Main Street

BISHOP, CA 93514

Phone (760) 872-0601

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November 2, 1999

Commissioner Robert A. Laurie  
California Energy Commission  
1516 Ninth Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

Dear Commissioner Laurie:

This letter is in response to your request of October 12, 1999 for information on Road, Traffic and Safety Conditions on State Route 127. Caltrans District 9 has coordinated data collection with District 8 to respond with data to address the areas listed in Attachment 2 of your request, and the resulting information is included as an attachment to this letter.

You will note from the data provided that State Route 127 is not constructed with turnouts or wide shoulders, and in several places, crosses the Amargosa River drainage. In addition, State Route 127 is one of many routes within the State Highway System that were not originally engineered and constructed by Caltrans, but were transferred from local to state responsibility at some time in the past. Our information regarding the structural cross-section of this roadway and its ability to withstand major increases in volumes or weight of traffic is limited.

While the routing of low-level radioactive materials is regulated at the federal level under Title 49, Part 397.101 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Caltrans remains concerned about the potential impact to the infrastructure and to the travelling public from the use of State Route 127 instead of minimizing the distance traveled and utilizing the Interstate Highway System to the greatest extent possible.

If you have any questions concerning the information provided, please contact me, or Brad Mettam at (760) 872-0689.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. P. Hallenbeck", written over a horizontal line.

THOMAS P. HALLENBECK  
District Director

BRM:jh

Enclosure

## STATE ROUTE 127 INYO COUNTY

### General Route Information

- Total route length in District 9 is 49.42 miles.
- Segment 1: PM 0.00/14.75 San Bernardino/Inyo County Line to SR178 East in Shoshone
- Segment 2: PM 14.75/16.43 SR178 East in Shoshone to SR178 West, North of Shoshone
- Segment 3: PM 16.43/42.15 SR178 West, N. of Shoshone to SR190 at Death Valley Junction
- Segment 2: PM 42.15/49.42 SR190 at Death Valley Junction to Nevada State Line
- Route provides link between California and Nevada.
- Major access road to Death Valley National Park.
- Interregional and recreational travel are primary uses.
- 2-lane undivided conventional highway
- No access control
- Rural Minor Arterial
- Primary System
- Part of Interregional Road System
- Part of Freeway and Expressway System
- Eligible as State Scenic Highway but not designated
- Part of California State Highways Truck Network and designated as Terminal Access Route
- Not included in the Subsystem of Highways for the movement of Extra-Legal Permit Loads (SHELL) system; nor AB 866 or the Federal Highway Administration designate this route suitable for larger trucks.
- SR 190, State Line Road
- No passing lanes
- No right/left turn lanes
- No HOV lanes
- Rolling Terrain
- Posted Speed: 60mph
- No Special Features
- Surface type-"H" AC base and surface (at least 3" thick; there are exceptional areas with 12" thick AC)
- Outside Shoulder paved as shown in the table below:

Width (m)	0	0.3	0.6	1.2	2.4
Length (km)	21.24	19.31	37.66	1.45	0.16
% of Total	27	24	47	2	NA

- Inside Shoulder: 0

- Sight restriction: 12%
- Right of way: Varies from 30.5m to 122m
- Traveled Way 24ft
- Class 3 route (lowest priority) maintain only (keep route open and in safe operating condition).
- No capital or operating improvements planned through 2015

#### **A. Roadway Conditions:**

- Hwy Capacity Rating  
1997: "A" (except through small areas of Shoshone and Death Valley Junction)  
2015: "B" (Segment 1), "A" (Other segments)
- Number of travel lanes 2
- Width of travel lanes 12 to 14ft (mostly 12ft)
- Width of emergency parking lanes none, except a few intermittent gravel areas
- Left and right turn lanes none
- Divided highway segments none
- General pavement conditions Deflection levels exceeded tolerable levels in 1995. Some pavement cracking-no shoulders-trucks can cause damage if they run on the edge of the pavement
- Truck weight and size restrictions? no weight restrictions-a high route-needs 1 pilot car for Loads over 10ft, 2 pilot cars for loads over 12ft
- Steep grades Route elevation rises at Ibex Pass (Inyo/San BDO Co Ln) to 2090 ft.  
  
Grades: under 3%: 98%  
3% to 6%: 1%  
over 6%: 1%
- Sharp curves Numerous horizontal curves have posted advisory speeds ranging between 25 and 50 mph. (8 @ 50mph, 2 @ 40mph, 1 @ 35mph, 1 @ 25mph)

#### **B. Traffic and Safety Conditions**

- Traffic Counts by vehicle classifications

##### Annual Average AADT:

	<u>Segment1</u>	<u>Segment2</u>	<u>Segment3</u>	<u>Segment4</u>
1995	900	400	300	600
2015	1100	500	400	700

Between mid-December 1994 and the end of December 1995, machine vehicle counts were collected by District 9 to determine vehicle mix on SR127. 309,332 vehicles were

counted. 82% were passenger vehicles, 11% were trucks, 6% were RVs and 1% were buses.

- Accident statistics for past three years/types of accidents

7/1/96-6/30/99: 26 accidents, 0 fatalities, 20 injuries  
14 hit objects, 8 overturns, 4 other

Types of vehicles involved: 14 passenger cars, 2 truck/tractor w/trailer, 8 pickup/panel trucks, 1 school bus, 1 truck/tractor w/tank trailer, emergency vehicle

Actual accident rate: .82 per million vehicle miles of travel

Average statewide rate for similar facilities in same period: 1.62 per MVM

- Seasonal weather conditions-months likely to affect commercial truck operations

Route is subject to flash flooding/wind/high summer temperatures (over 100 degrees not uncommon)

- Proposed construction activities resulting in lane closures

None except cyclical maintenance

### **C. Special Operating Conditions**

- Restriction of route for hazardous material

Questions on hazardous waste should be directed to CHP 916-327-3310

- Time of day or week restrictions on hazardous material shipments

Questions on hazardous waste should be directed to CHP 916-327-3310

- Dates of special events which would cause significant traffic congestion

Death Valley 49er's Annual Encampment – second week in November

Thanksgiving and President's Day brings thousands of people to the Dumont Dunes area for organized sand drags and hill climbs.

Recreational peaks in spring and fall

- Tourist and special commuter conditions

This route experiences closures for special events, such as the "Baker to Las Vegas" Run, and periods of high tourist traffic during seasonal peaks.

Desert route is subject to flash flooding, wind and extreme summer temperatures. After a recent September storm, several areas had to be cleared of a large amount of debris washed onto the roadway. Road closures are common about every two years. Two dry river crossings have a gauge for drivers to see how much water is covering the roadway during/after storm events.

## **STATE ROUTE 127 SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY**

### **General Route Information**

- Total route length in District 8 is 41.5 miles.
- Segment 1: PM L0.00/0.64 Baker, Jct. Rte 15 to School Road
- Segment 2: PM0.64/41.47 School Road to San Bernardino/Inyo County Line
- Route provides link between California and Nevada.
- Major access road to Death Valley National Park.
- Interregional and recreational travel are primary uses.
- 2-lane undivided conventional highway
- No access control
- Rural Minor Arterial
- Primary System
- Part of Interregional Road System
- Part of Freeway and Expressway System
- Eligible as State Scenic Highway but not designated
- Part of California State Highways Truck Network and designated as Terminal access Route
- Not included in the Subsystem of Highways for the movement of Extra-Legal Permit Loads (SHELL) system; nor AB 866 or Federal Highway Administration designate this route suitable for larger trucks.
- No parallel routes
- No passing lanes
- No right/left turn lanes
- No HOV lanes
- Rolling Terrain
- AHS: 60
- No Special Features
- Surface type-"H" AC base and surface (at least 3" thick ; there are exceptional areas with 12" thick AC)
- No paved Shoulder on either side of highway
- Inside Shoulder 0
- Right-of-way width: 40ft
- Sight restriction: 38%
- Traveled Way 24ft
- Class 3 route (lowest priority) maintain only (keep route open and in safe operating condition).
- No capital or operating improvements planned through 2015

## **A. Roadway Conditions:**

- Hwy Capacity Rating (Segment 1-Jct Rte 15 to School Rd) 1995: "C" 2015: "D"  
(Segment 2-School Rd to SBd/Inyo Co Ln) 1995: "A" 2015 "B"
- Number of travel lanes 2
- Width of travel lanes 12 to 14ft (mostly 12ft)
- Width of emergency parking lanes none
- Left and right turn lanes none
- Divided highway segments none
- General pavement conditions some pavement cracking-no shoulders-trucks can cause damage if they run on the edge of the pavement- District 9 performs maintenance on the route.
- Truck weight and size restrictions no weight restrictions-a high route-needs 1 pilot car for Loads over 10ft, 2 pilot cars for loads over 12ft
- Steep grades Route elevation rises at Ibex Pass (Inyo/San BDO Co Ln) to 2090 ft.  
  
Grades: under 3%: 46%  
3% to 6%: 42%  
over 6%: 12%
- Sharp Curves Between postmiles 37.73 and 39.47, there is one 45mph curve and two 50 mph curves

## **B. Traffic and Safety Conditions**

- Traffic Counts by vehicle classifications

### 1997 Annual Average AADT:

<u>Location</u>	<u>Vehicle AADT</u>	<u>Truck AADT</u>	<u>Truck % Tot Veh</u>	<u>Yr/Ver/Est</u>
Jct. Rte. 15, Baker	4350	448	10.2	1993 Est
Saratoga Spring Rd	550	56	10.3	1993 Est

Caltrans District 9, Inyo County, Death Valley National Park and Shoshone Chamber of Commerce conducted a travel survey in March and May of 1994 on Route 127 in Inyo County to establish baseline data travel patterns: traffic mix in accessing potential impacts if designated a preferred route for hauling of high nuclear waste.

Between mid-December 1994 and the end of December 1995, south of SR-178, machine vehicle counts were collected by District 9 to determine vehicle mix. 308,332 vehicles were counted. 82% were passenger vehicles, 11% were trucks, 6% were RVs

and 1% were buses. These counts should also be reflective of the District 8 region, as there are no other intersecting routes Between I-15 and SR-178.

- Accident statistics for past three years/types of accidents

4-1-96 to 3-31-99: 25 accidents, 1 fatality, 16 injuries  
1 sideswipe, 14 hit objects, 10 overturns

Types of vehicles involved: 14 passenger cars, 3 truck/tractor w/trailer, 6 pickup/panel trucks, 2 pickup/panel truck w/trailer

Actual accident rate: .75 per million vehicle miles of travel

Average statewide rate for similar facilities in same period: 1.29 per MVM

- Seasonal weather conditions-months likely to affect commercial truck operations

Route is subject to flash flooding/wind/high summer temperature (over 100 degrees not uncommon)

- Proposed construction activities resulting in lane closures

None except cyclical maintenance.

### **C. Special Operating Conditions**

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